

Monthly Report for April 2018

Submitted May 4, 2018

Meetings and Conference

Research and Policy Advisory Board Meeting

The Research and Policy Advisory Board (RPB) met in April. Heath Witzten, Research Fellow at the MLDS Center, presented preliminary findings on his research on the Educational Assistance Grant, academic persistence and earnings. RPB discussed the structure of the Center's research agenda, the role of a research and output plan and the process for developing a research and output plan.

Data Governance Advisory Board Meeting

The Data Governance Advisory (Data GAB) met on April 18th. Staff provided Data GAB members an update from the March Governing Board Meeting. Data GAB Members and Center staff discussed upcoming changes to the MLDS Data Inventory to be presented to the Governing Board at the June Meeting. Additionally, members began a discussion on the technical and data issues related to program evaluation.

Legislation

The 2018 Session of the Maryland General Assembly ended on April 9th. The following is the final status of legislation impacting the Center.

1. Senate Bill 978 - *Career Preparation Act* - Passed - This bill requires various entities to provide MHEC with the identifying information of individuals who receive certain business licenses, industry certificates, and vocational certificates. The bill then requires MHEC to provide the information to the MLDS Center. Finally, the bill requires the Center, along with the Governor's Workforce Development Board to submit an annual report on wages earned, hours worked per week, and industry of employment for high school graduates for the five year period after graduation.
2. House Bill 378 - *State Department of Education - Social Security Number of Students* - Failed - This bill prohibited MSDE from collecting, holding or storing social security numbers. This bill would have had a negative impact on the Center's ability to match K-12 students to workforce records.
3. House Bill 823 - *Education - Public School Teachers - Preparation* - Failed - This bill required the Center, along with MHEC, to establish and update a comprehensive reporting dashboard for each teacher preparation program offered at an institution of higher education. Despite the fact that the bill did not pass, the Center will work towards developing a dashboard to address some of the criteria established in the bill.

Center Output

The Center completed work on three data requests related to graduation, transfer and workforce outcomes for Associate's degree students attending Maryland community colleges.

- The first focused on outcomes for students graduating with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree. This analysis included data on employment after graduating with the AAS as well as employment for AAS students that subsequently earned a bachelor's degree.
- The second request explored the educational and workforce outcomes for students in Engineering-related Associate's degree programs at Maryland community colleges. The Center presented this analysis to the ASE Oversight Council. The ASE Oversight Council is tasked with reviewing the education and workforce outcomes for these programs. The Center will be working closely with MHEC and the ASE Oversight Council to expand this study to support their on-going work.
- Finally, the Center completed its preliminary analysis of the educational and workforce outcomes for students in Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) in Maryland community colleges. The results will be presented at the AAT Oversight Council meeting in May and will be incorporated into the Center's on-going work related to studying the teacher pipeline.

Research Branch

Research Reports

The research team has concluded the first phase of the poverty study requested by Senator Ferguson. Descriptive statistics point to the importance of including students' history of eligibility for free and reduced price meals (FARMS), rather than using eligibility for FARMS at a single point in time. Additionally, multilevel modeling results indicate the importance of both individual student poverty and school poverty in predicting long-term outcomes. Results from this first phase will be presented at the May Research Series (see below).

The findings from the research report examining the causal effects of the Education Assistance (EA) grant in Maryland were presented at the Research and Policy Advisory Board meeting. Mr. Witzen has added another year of data to increase his sample size and improve his ability to look at long-term outcomes. Additionally, the research team has been exploring the rates of multiple membership in schools (i.e., when students attend more than 1 school over the course of their academic career) in the MLDS data. This exploration will help with accurately estimating the effect of student mobility and properly nesting students within all schools attended, providing for more accurate results.

Research Series

The April research series was presented by Dr. Nolan Pope, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Maryland. Dr. Pope presented research using test-score and non-test-score measures of student achievement and behavior from over a million students in the Los Angeles Unified School District to estimate multiple dimensions of teacher quality. Results indicated that test-score and non-test-score measures of teacher quality are only weakly correlated, and that both measures of teacher quality affect students' performance in high school.

The May research series has been prepared by the research team and is focused on the long term associations between student and school level poverty and high school and college outcomes. Analyses focus on the relative and interactive associations between student and school concentrated poverty on high school graduation, assessment scores, and college enrollment.

Conference Presentations

Dr. Henneberger prepared a presentation entitled “Easing the Transition from High School to College: Using Statewide Longitudinal Data to Evaluate Dual Enrollment Programs” for the meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) in Minneapolis, MN. SRA mission focuses on the theoretical, empirical, and policy research issues of adolescence. Heath Witzten and Alison Preston were co-authors on the presentation.

Synthetic Data Project

In April, the SDP Team finished the overall design--which variables to include, structure of files and cohort--of the gold standard datasets (GSDSs). The team has ongoing issues to deal with as they prepare the data for synthesization. The team is looking forward to getting the new IT Project Manager on board, which will take place in May. Finally, the SDP Team has established and filled a post-doctoral position that will start in July. The post-doc will be an important team member, whose focus will be on testing the research utility and validity of the synthetic data for research analyses.

System Management

Tasks

1. Along with MSDE and DoIT, Center staff is continuing to evaluate different options for continuing the Center’s Oracle licensing and use at the state enterprise data center.
2. Center staff continue to meet monthly to address security issues and complete actions to tighten the Center’s security profile. Also, Center staff is evaluating the weekly Intrusion Detection System reports.
3. Center staff is exploring new report development tools for Center output. Those tools are Tableau, Qlik and Microsoft Power BI.
4. Center staff is expanding the use of JIRA (a team management software tool). JIRA is being used to manage and track all data requests and other agency projects. One byproduct of using JIRA is that it creates various reports that are useful in tracking various metrics, such as project time to completion.

Data Loads

The system management team:

1. Completed loading Unemployment Insurance 2017 Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 data files;
2. Completed loading 138,370 enrollment records for academic year 2017 Summer term and 357,111 enrollment records for academic year 2018 Fall term from the MHEC student enrollment information data collection;
3. Completed loading 201,835 assessments (ACT and SAT test scores and Math, English and reading remedial assessments) for 57,309 college students (primarily first-time and transfer students) also from the MHEC student enrollment information data collection;
4. Completed loading 59,621 academic year 2017 external credit information provided by MHEC;
5. Working on loading K12 Assessments including PARCC that were received from MSDE;
6. Working on loading Financial Aid Information System data file from MHEC; and
7. Performed ongoing identity resolution for individuals who have multiple system ID’s for the same identifier (SSN).